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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Suve, P., Selg, P., & Sootla, G. (2016). Two decades of Estonian police and the (ir)relevance of police models for the development of safety policy. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 8(1), 36-52. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-62525-3>

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## Two Decades of Estonian Police and the (Ir)Relevance of Police Models for the Development of Safety Policy

Priit Suve\*, Peeter Selg & Georg Sootla

### Abstract

Police models are designed to improve safety in society. Although Estonia has not deliberately used any (combination of) police models for developing its policies of safety and its police reforms since the country regained independence, its safety has improved considerably during the last couple of decades. The scholarly discussions about police models are overwhelmingly about the possible effects of different models on safety management and about their application to particular countries. However, countries like Estonia with no consistent conceptions of police have received little attention in academic literature. We aim to fill this gap by analysing the developments of the Estonian police in its philosophical, strategic, tactical and organisational dimensions over the period between 1991 and 2013. The analysed materials include the official police development plans, legislation, statutes, training programs and statistics about the police. Our analysis shows that although safety in Estonia has improved considerably, developments of the Estonian police are characterised by internal discrepancies and inconsistencies. In view of this, we put forth some hypotheses for further studies regarding policy development in a situation where policy is not explicitly stated or where organisational reforms are seen not as 'simple' or 'complex' problems, but as 'wicked' problems.

**Keywords:** community policing, police reform, Estonia, wicked problems.

### Introduction

Almost throughout the entire modern age policing has been the main tool for the advancement of safety, one of the basic needs of society. In academic literature, different policing conceptions have been elaborated. They are usually referred to as 'police models' and are often utilised for organising policing practices. Coherently applying some 'police models' (or combinations thereof) is usually presumed to be a crucial factor for success in implementing police reforms, fighting crime and, consequently, advancing safety in society. The current paper critically examines this presumption by analysing the exceptional case of Estonia, a country that since its restoration of independence has not applied any 'police models' coherently in its policies, but has nevertheless managed to advance its safety to a considerable extent.

'Police model' in this paper and in the relevant literature does not refer to a theoretical or empirical *explanation* or *interpretation* of the functioning of the police, but rather a certain set of *policy proposals* for organising the police for the advancement of safety. In that sense, 'police models', like all policy proposals, are *normative*. Though always informed by theoretical or empirical explanations or interpretations of the workings of the police, they consequently answer the question 'What *should* be done (by the officials, the politicians, the people, etc.) for the advancement of safety in a certain community through organising the police?' The answers extracted from the practices of different

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countries and academic studies range from models like 'military policing' (Lorinskas & Kulis, 1986; Jermier & Berkers 1979); 'bureaucratic policing' (Reiss, 1992; Cordner, 1978), 'professional policing' (Stinchcombe, 1980; Kelling & Moore, 1988), 'community policing' (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990; Skogan & Hartnett, 1997) to 'problem-oriented policing' (Goldstein, 1990; Braga, 2008), 'CompStat' (Walsh, 2001; Yüksel, 2013), 'intelligence-led policing' (Ratcliffe, 2012; Maguire, 2000) and others.<sup>1</sup>

Though the experiences of both success and failure related to applying these police models have been widely discussed, discussion of countries that have not consciously used any conception of policing in framing and implementing their safety policies but at the same time have managed to make considerable advances in safety is a topic that has been virtually neglected. Estonia, the focus of this paper, is a case in point. In view of internationally established criteria (number of homicides and prisoners, sense of security), overall safety in Estonia has improved significantly despite the fact that there has not been any pervasive approach to policing after the country regained independence in 1991. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a remarkable decrease in the number of homicides; the number of prisoners has been dropping since 2007; and based on studies of victimisation, we can say that the fear of crime among the inhabitants of Estonia has continually weakened and the perception of safety has grown (Saar, 2013, pp. 86-91). If safety in Estonia has improved so considerably without the application of any policing model by the state, we could pose the following question: what is the overall function of such models for the advancement of safety? The question is important, since the practice of combining different approaches for organising the police has been common for advancing safety (Scheider, Chapman, & Schapiro, 2009). However, much less attention has been paid to police organisations in countries where the police have largely been arranged more or less in an ad hoc manner or at least not in accordance with some particular model or combination of models. In this paper, we aim to fill this gap through focusing on the developments of the Estonian police during the period of 1991-2013.

Fresh insight into developments that influence safety arrangements in such a specific context could be useful for countries with similar circumstances. Most importantly though, it could be a valuable lesson about the policy development process in which the policy itself is not explicitly stated. Such situations seem to be ever more relevant – both locally and globally – in the current context, where policy problems are increasingly wicked problems, 'those that are complex, unpredictable, open ended, or intractable' (Head and Alford, 2015, p. 712). Those kinds of problems are essentially unsolvable or even undefinable – they can be 'handled', 'treated', or 'coped with', but they cannot be 'solved' in the sense that 'simple' or even 'complex' problems can be (Camillus 2008).<sup>2</sup> In view of this tendency, the expectation of an explicit statement or model of policy is gradually losing its relevance. The fact that societal needs (such as safety) can still be met under these circumstances is, therefore, a lesson of interest for policy analysts and practitioners more generally than merely those concerned with the issues of safety and police in Estonia. We will return to this issue in our conclusion.

Although Estonia has not had any explicit policy *model* for the advancement of safety and the organisation of police, we can still make sense of its *practices* by juxtaposing them to a refined ideal-typical model. For this we turn to the community police model, which is undoubtedly the most influential police model of the past half century. We analyse the developments of the Estonian police from 1991 to 2013 by comparing them to the ideal-typical model of community policing. For breaking the model down into analytical subunits, we take our lead from Cordner, who distinguishes the

1 Those models have different roots and developmental paths. They have been systematised through tracing the historical changes of police from modern to globalising approaches (Ponsaers, 2001), describing the police according to its functions (Wilson, 1978; Bittner, 1970), depicting the police's developments in view of democracy (Manning, 2010; Bayley, 2006), highlighting different frameworks for organising police (Jiao, 1997), etc.

2 See Roberts (2000) and Head & Alford (2015) for the distinction between 'simple', 'complex' and 'wicked' problems; and Rittel & Webber (1973) for the most classical exposition of the idea of 'wicked problems' in planning and policy.

philosophical, the strategic, the tactical and the organisational dimensions of the community police model (Cordner, 1995, p. 1; Cordner & Scarborough, 2013, pp. 16-17). The community police model is so widely discussed in the police literature, and there are numerous other frameworks for presenting this model in a concise manner (see, for instance, Jiao, 1997; Ponsaers, 2001). The reason we prefer Cordner's four-dimensional framework of community policing to possible others is that it is the most well-known among police literature and in our view also gives the clearest and most analytically rigorous statements of the model. But why choose community police model rather than some others mentioned above? Why aren't we organising the developments of the Estonian police through a comparison of an ideal-typical model of 'military police', 'bureaucratic policing' or some others? There are two major reasons for that: 1) community policing is the most influential police conception of recent decades, but it has also been convincingly shown to be problematic in both theory and practice (Goris, 2001; Mastrofski, 2006; Weisburd & Eck, 2004); 2) the philosophical orientation of the Estonian police over the first decade after the country regained independence has in many respects been in accord with community policing, despite the absence of the explicit utilisation of this model by policy makers and police officials. Comparing the developments of the Estonian police to the ideal-typical framework of the community police model helped us bring to the fore a certain internal discrepancy in the Estonian police between the developments of its philosophical, strategic, tactical and organisational dimensions.

It is very important to bear in mind from the beginning that by utilising Cordner's four-dimensional framework of community police (to be untangled below) we are not maintaining that community policing is the *right* model for the police in Estonia or in some other country in transition. We use it only to make sense of the empirical phenomena, to organise them in an intelligible manner. Approaches analogous to ours are quite common in the historically oriented social sciences. For instance, in his famous *Sources of Social Power*, Michael Mann has a four-dimensional ideal-typical framework of power: he distinguishes ideological, economic, military and political power for organising the history of power relations. He does not prescribe that some societies are better off with either one or the other (combination) of those forms of power, but uses his model to 'cope with the patterned mess that is human society' (1993, p. 4).

Before we proceed, we have to acknowledge a couple of limitations of our discussion. First, our results and theses are based on the analyses of public documents framing police work in its different dimensions. In this paper, we back those analyses neither with ethnographic studies of concrete police action nor with surveys or in depth interviews. Again, a comprehensive study of this topic would require such a mixed methods design, especially when discussing the tactics and organisational culture of police. But given that to this day there has been no basic research done on the developments of the Estonian police that would cover the entire period after the country regained independence in 1991, we think it is better to move step by step and put our more restricted results on the table for scholarly discussion that might lead to fruitful research questions for future work on the same topic.

Second, in analysing the developments of the Estonian police through the framework of community police we do not intend to provide an explanation or *prediction* regarding those developments, but a systematic *description*, which is organised through using four dimensions of a certain (normative) ideal-type. Thus, in this paper our research objectives are mainly *contextual description* and *classification*, both of which are indispensable starting points for research – comparative or not – aiming at more causally oriented *hypothesis-testing* (explanation) or *prediction* that we plan to leave for future work regarding this issue.<sup>3</sup>

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On the centrality of those four objectives – description, classification, hypothesis-testing, prediction – for comparative research in general see Landman (2008, Ch. 1). For eminent statements on the crucial importance of description for the social sciences and on the counterproductivity of devaluing descriptive arguments see Abbott (1998) and Gerring (2011, part II; 2012).

Our paper proceeds as follows. In the first section, entitled 'The four dimensions of the community police model', we outline the ideal-type of community policing by distinguishing its philosophical, strategic, tactical and organisational dimensions in separate subsections. The second section 'The case of the Estonian police' starts with a brief general background of the Estonian case and an overview of our data and methods used for data gathering and analysis. The rest of the second section proceeds by utilising the four ideal-typical dimensions of community police for organising the results of the analysis of the Estonian police into a coherent narrative. In the final section 'Conclusion', we sum up our analysis and set its results in the wider context by proposing several hypotheses and directions for further research on both policing and policy problems more generally.

## The four dimensions of the community police model

The notion of community policing covers a large area, with topics ranging from citizen participation to prevention. The notion also captures different things for different people and the well-known statement that it is a 'philosophy, not a program' has been used so extensively that the tracks of its originator have been lost over the course of time (Cordner, 1995, p. 1; Roth et al., 2000, p. 183). The main goals of community policing are widely believed to include: (1) augmenting the police's accountability to both the people and the law and (2) increasing the effectiveness of the police to cope with the local problems of safety and to avoid repeats of past accusations of indifference and ineffectiveness on the part of the police (Greene, 2000, p. 302). In this paper, we do not aim at covering the full range of dimensions that could be tied to the notion of 'community policing.' Instead, we treat the latter as a certain ideal-type of arranging police work in light of which we organise our analysis of the case of the Estonian police. Cordner analytically divided this ideal-type into four interrelated dimensions – philosophical, strategic, tactical and organisational – which is especially useful for our purposes. We will turn to his scheme in more detail before moving to the analysis of the Estonian police.

### The philosophical dimension

The philosophical dimension of community policing emphasises its central ideas and tenets and includes at least three characteristics.

- (1) The functions of police should be wider in scope than the narrow aims of fighting crime or law enforcement (Cordner, 1995, p. 2). Widening the scope of functions is necessary, because people expect greater empathy and a more extensive set of services from the police than that offered by the professional police. Also, the structure of the police should change, as well as the manner in which it achieves its ends (Mastrofski, 2006, p. 47). It is often pointed out that historically police functions have been wider and that recently they have been narrowing, probably due to media influence and the model of professional police.
- (2) From the viewpoint of community policing, the police have to ensure that people have free access to the police organisation and provide opportunities for the community to give input to its policies and decisions. Although the political level, which is legitimised through the electoral system, sets the goals and directions for the police, it is not sufficient. Individual communities must be able to have a say in how the police act towards them and it must be possible for local interest groups to discuss their opinions and visions directly with the policemen (Cordner, 1995, p. 2). The purpose of community policing is to strengthen the local community's capacity to fight and prevent crime. The police have no monopoly in this fight and are rather producers of safety together with the community (Skogan, 2006, p. 29).

- (3) Community policing supports the practices of surveillance and law enforcement that are formed according to local norms and values. The police chiefs have to support those decisions made by policemen that take into account 'community's wishes' on which law should be implemented and under which circumstances (Cordner, 1995, p. 2).

### The strategic dimension

The strategic dimension of the community police includes the conceptions of working arrangements for bringing the philosophy into action and linking ideas, beliefs and the applied programs and practices. We can distinguish three characteristics of this dimension.

- (1) A pervasive feature of community police is its focus on a concrete territory. In case of patrolling, for instance, it entails a fundamental shift from time-based responsibility to territorial responsibility, meaning that a policeman handles safety issues not only during his/her shift, but is responsible for the safety of a concrete area 24 hours a day. The most important factor is connecting the policemen to certain areas for longer periods, which should increase people's trust towards the police and mutual confidence and cooperation.
- (2) The second strategic feature of community police is its focus on proactive and preventive activities. Here we should highlight two aspects. First, there is an effort to use the time of police work better. For instance, the patrol policemen are given concrete preventive, problem-solving or community-related assignments for the time they are not involved in responding to any concrete emergency calls. The other aspect has to do with the problem-oriented approach. All policemen are encouraged to look beyond any reported crime with the aim of identifying their causes.
- (3) The third strategic feature is orienting action towards the problems of concrete communities and concentrating on results, not on procedures.

Finally, contrary to professional police, the community police are focused on the problems of the community not on those related to intra-organisational and administrative goals (Cordner, 1995, pp. 2-4). Policemen do not have to give up traditional methods of police work; they just have to be able to also use the measures that are alternative to those prescribed by the justice system (Goldstein, 1987, p. 15). The diversity that this entails is one of the reasons why it is difficult to define community policing (Holmberg, 2002, p. 32).

### The tactical dimension

Though offhand the strategic and tactical dimensions of community policing might seem to be identical, the latter has a more concrete and direct focus. It expresses the ways the philosophies and strategies of community policing are articulated in terms of concrete programs and styles of police action.

The most important tactical change is related to reorienting the police from random patrolling, responding to emergency calls and application-based criminal proceedings to a more diverse police action (Cordner, 1995, pp. 4-5). Skogan & Harnett have noted that community police's problem-orientatedness 'represents a minor revolution in police work' and marks a reorientation from crime fighting to problem solving (1997, p. 7). The proponents of community policing are convinced that fact-oriented police work needs to be done, but the emphasis should be on the causes and circumstances of problems (Cordner, 1995, p. 5).

One of the aims of involving the community is raising the level of trust between the police and the inhabitants. Ideally, the community should know their policemen and the police their community (Grabosky, 2009, p. 7). The police should not see themselves as the sole guarantee of safety; instead they should encourage individuals and groups to handle their problems themselves (Cordner, 1995, pp.

4-6). The interrelation between community and police is the most frequently mentioned characteristic of community policing and it is presumed to provide more recourses for the local police and bring more tangible results (Mastrofski, 2006, p. 46).

### The organisational dimension

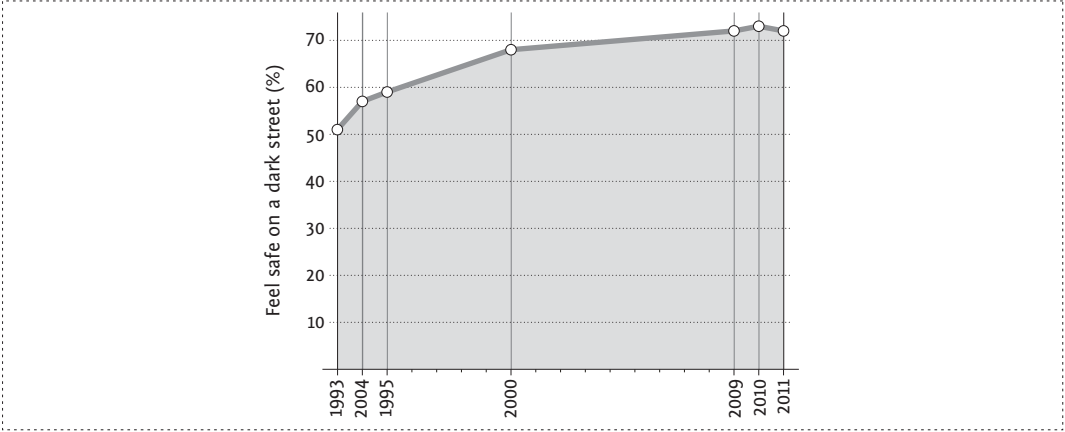
Community policing aims to make police organisations less bureaucratic, less specialised and less hierarchical. Policemen are seen as generalists rather than specialists. Decentralised management is the cornerstone of community policing, and it is hoped that it contributes to the more efficient delivery of police services (Greene, 2000, p. 314). Organisationally, the features of community police are articulated with regard to three elements: organisational structure, organisational culture and style of management (Eck & Maguire, 2006, p. 2019). In the traditional police organisation, it was considered to be self-evident that policies and practices are formulated top-down through rules and regulations. The community police assign policemen to areas in which the level of discretion necessary for working is ensured. The aim is to raise the police's flexibility in decision-making at the client level (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997, p. 6). One of the main goals of decentralisation is to stimulate and encourage police to form a partnership with the community (Eck & Maguire, 2006, pp. 217-218). Those changes require different police culture than that characteristic to hierarchical bureaucracy. Community police empowers the rank-and-file-officers and encourages autonomous action through emphasising the closeness to clients of the lowest rank employees, since the latter are best prepared to take decisions in their assigned area (Skogan, 2006, p. 41). In addition, the community policing approach is associated with the application of management principles peculiar to the private sector. It was hoped that this would make police officers more creative and encourage them to apply the problem-oriented approach that follows the interests of clients (Eck & Maguire, 2006, p. 218).

### The case of the Estonian police

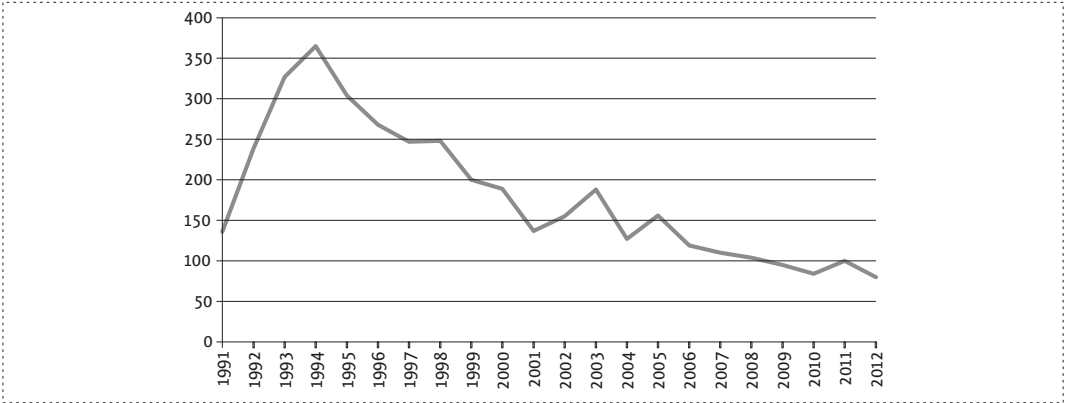
#### General background: the case of Estonia, data and methods

In this section, we analyse the changes in the Estonian police between 1991 and 2013 by analytically distinguishing its philosophy, strategy, tactics and organisation. After Estonia regained independence (1991), the Estonian police have been subject to many changes, several of which could even be considered radical turnarounds. The reorganisation of the Soviet and Russian-speaking military organisation – the militia – into the police force as a civil organisation of a democratic regime took place with tremendous speed. People were enthusiastic, but lacking knowledge and skills for building up democracy. Nevertheless, the advancement of safety, one of the major goals of policing, has been achieved in Estonia: the sense of security has grown (Figure 1), crime rates have fallen (Figure 2), and trust towards police has almost tripled between 1995 and 2012 (Figure 3). But Estonia has not used any well-known police models for framing its general policies regarding the police after it regained independence.

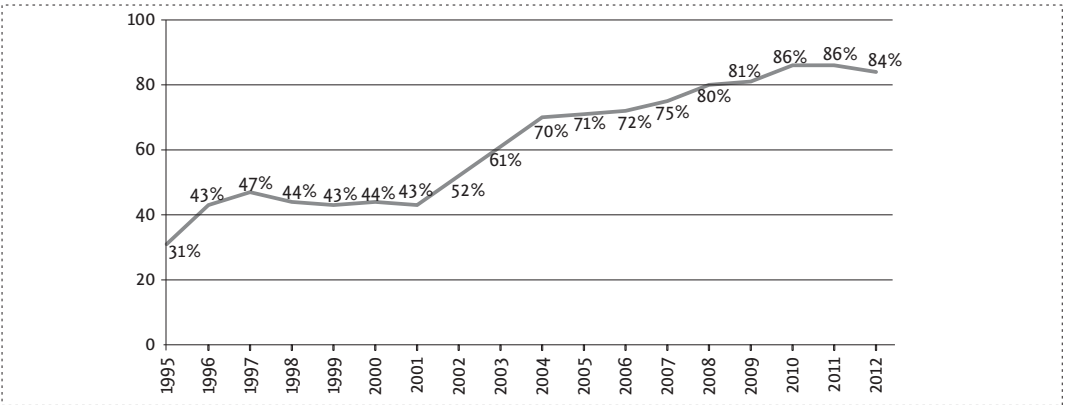
When comparing the police in Estonia today to the restored police organisation of 1991, we must highlight some significant organisational changes. In the years following the restoration of police (1991-2003), there were 17 mostly county-based police prefectures, and when they were united, four police prefectures were formed in 2004-2009. In 2010, the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB) was founded. Currently, it is Estonia's largest governmental organisation, with over 5,000 employees working for internal safety. After the foundation of PBGB, the four prefectures continued with renewed staff and additional tasks, and since 2012 these prefectures are part of the PBGB and do not exist as autonomous legal bodies anymore. In view of organisational changes, we can divide the development of the Estonian police into three temporal phases: the period of small prefectures (1991-



**Figure 1:** Growth of the sense of security among the Estonian population, 1993-2011  
Source: Saar, 2013, p. 89



**Figure 2:** Number of homicides and attempted homicides in Estonia 1991-2012  
Source: Saar, 2013, p. 86



**Figure 3:** Trust in the police in Estonia 1995-2012  
Source: Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2013c



2003); the forming of police regions with grand prefectures (2004-2009); and the forming of the highly centralised PBGB as of 2010. Out of these three phases, the most difficult one to observe is the first phase, especially the very beginning years of the newly restored police, since the documentation of that period is not at a comparable level with the current record. It is, however, sufficient for outlining general tendencies of this period.

The following is based on documentary analysis, concentrating exclusively on public documents (see Scott, 1990). For grasping the relevant legal framework, we analysed two principal laws regulating police action during the period under consideration (Eesti Vabariigi Ülemnõukogu, 1990; Riigikogu, 2010b), and four basic regulations structuring the organisations at both the levels of government and prefectures and also positioning the police within the overall safety field of Estonia (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet peadirektor, 2012; Vabariigi Valitsus, 1992; Siseminister, 2009; Vabariigi Valitsus, 1991). For understanding the prescribed developments in the police, we analysed four major development plans (Politseiamet, 1999; Riigikogu 2008; Riigikogu 2010a; Siseministeerium, 2001). To comprehend the more direct action of the police and the changes in the police's understanding of police/community relations, we analysed five instructions for police work (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2010a; 2010b; Politseiamet, 1993; 1998; 2001). As will be highlighted below, elements of a community-oriented approach enter the general rhetoric of the regulations structuring the Estonian police. For making sense of the opportunities and capacities the police have for implementing this approach, we first analysed the statistics about the Estonian police gathered by the organisation itself (Politsei- ja Piirivalveameti liiklusbüroo, 2013; Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2013b; 2013c). Second, we analysed the police training programs for the years 2010-2013 (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2013a). Consequently, we constructed a systematic narrative of the developments of the Estonian police between 1991 and 2013, by organising it along the four dimensions of the Estonian police – its philosophy, its strategy, its tactics and its organisation – that we compared to the respective dimensions of the ideal-type of community police model as outlined in the previous section.

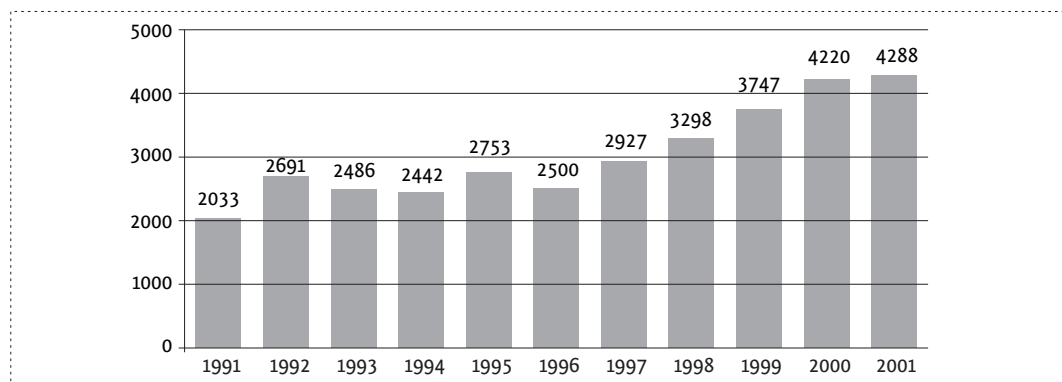
## The philosophy of the Estonian police

In the 1990s, the development of the Estonian police was based on the Police Law adopted in 1990. The first significant strategic document that set the goal of defining the future perspectives for the Estonian police was *The Development Plan for Estonian Police for the Years 1999-2001*. Until that time 'clearly formulated principles and directions for developing the police were absent' (Politseiamet, 1999).<sup>4</sup> The next extensive directions for development were established in 2001 and covered the period until 2006. In this document, the concept of police is understood narrowly. Based on the fact that during the preceding decade the number of recorded crime had gone up considerably (Figure 4), it was established in this document that an 'efficient fight against crime' is 'the central task of the Estonian state' (Siseministeerium, 2001). Although prevention also receives attention, the emphasis is not on (community) participation, but on the police itself. Financial difficulties framed the police and kept it confined within limits (Siseministeerium, 2001). Beside the development plans of the police itself, the changes in the latter are shaped by general governmental safety development plans.

In the *Main Guidelines of Estonia's Security Policy until 2015*, endorsed by Riigikogu<sup>5</sup> in 2008, prevention is considered to be the central means for attaining safety. Whereas in the earlier conceptions the responsibility for safety was implicitly put on the government, here we witness that the responsibility is transferred to the individual (Riigikogu, 2008). The government's development plans seem to display a widening of the meaning of safety and an increasing importance of prevention and participation in general. Nevertheless, the police are mainly seen in crime-related contexts. Whereas development plans are documents that look to the future, laws establish concrete constraints and frames for the police.

4 All translations from Estonian are provided by the authors.

5 The official name of the Estonian Parliament.



**Figure 4:** Recorded crime 1991-2001 (per 100,000 inhabitants)

Source: Saar, Markina, Ahven, Annist & Ginter, 2002, p. 55

The understanding of police in the *Police Act* (Eesti Vabariigi Ülemnõukogu, 1990) is somewhat unsettling. On one hand, the police are viewed as a part of the safety system. On the other hand, tasks are assigned to the police that are obviously beyond their capacity. The current *Police and Border Guard Act* (Riigikogu, 2010b) leaves more breathing room for the police, but at the same time delimits the police narrowly within the administrative field of the Ministry of the Interior and does not position the police within the wider field of safety. Here we should add that compared to the police of the early 1990s, several tasks have been transferred to other offices (e. g., governing the means of traffic control, issuing driver's licences, registering people) and some tasks that had been temporarily withdrawn from the police's task list, have re-entered it (like issuing passports and ID-cards).

In both the laws and the development plans, there is an emphasis on cooperation with the inhabitants and on the obligation to inform the public, but in the reviewed documents no opportunities are created for the people to discuss local priorities with the police. The tip line introduced in the 1999 development plan (Politseiamet, 1999) was one of the first and few steps towards that.

In the police development directions endorsed in 2001, it is established that 'municipalities must actually participate in planning the police activities', Siseministeerium, 2001), but *The Development Directions for Criminal Policy until 2018* leaves open the issue of the relations between police and municipalities in crime prevention (Riigikogu, 2010a). Here the previously somewhat underrated role of municipality in ensuring safety is brought to the fore.

While in the mentioned development plan the importance of the local level is emphasised, the changes in legislation have a different tone, and responsiveness to regionally specific circumstances has been going downwards rather than upwards. The developments are characterised by both the weakening of the tie between the police and municipalities – as is evident from the comparison of the *Police Act* and *The Police and Border Guard Act* – as well as by the principle of branch-based management inculcated in the PBGB, which we turn to address below.

After the amalgamation of the police, immigration and border guard agencies in 2010 into PBGB, the internal diversity of staff and tasks grew considerably and the need to increase the internal integrity of territorial units (prefectures and their subunits) and generalist orientation of rank-and-file officers became acute. However, in 2012 the prefectures as autonomous units were reorganised into de-concentrated units, which meant that they lost their statuses of autonomous legal bodies. The latter, on the contrary, increased the functional logic and centralisation of the police organisation. So far, the territory-based approach had been pervasive in the structure and management of the police. In the new PBGB, it was prescribed that the police work would be organisationally based on four branches (border guard, criminal police, public order police, citizenship and migration) headed

by deputy director generals as line managers. As a result, the heads of prefectures were set aside from the line hierarchy and their role was reduced to coordination issues (Siseminister, 2009). The new management principles seek to inculcate nation-wide uniform police behaviour rather than responsiveness to regionally specific circumstances.

### The strategy of the Estonian police

What the community oriented strategy endeavours to achieve is to formulate conceptions of work arrangements that turn community philosophy into action. According to the plan of Estonia's Ministry of the Interior from 2001, the police must 'turn towards community-oriented organisation in their action' by 2006 (Siseministeerium, 2001). It is assumed that the causes of crime are, as a rule, of a local nature and related to a certain area. For this it is prescribed, among other things, that 'every municipal unit [must] have at least one constable who knows local people and circumstances and is able to act according to the environment' (Siseministeerium, 2001). Such a laconic statement, reminiscent of community policing principles, is not sufficient for claiming the existence of the respective community oriented strategy. Nevertheless, it is the first, and to this day the last attempt to introduce the principles of community policing explicitly to police development documents. In the reviewed development plan, the community oriented understanding of police was overwhelmingly related to constables servicing concrete areas. However, the actual decrease of police staff at the local level did not support this understanding in any way. Compared to 1993, the number of law enforcement policemen has decreased more than 40% by 2013 (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2013b) and one could claim that policemen's connection to local communities in the sense of community policing cannot be at its previous level.

Here it is important to mention a crucial change that has taken place in the government's conception of crime as compared to 2001. While barely ten years ago the Ministry of the Interior conceived police development through viewing the causes of crimes as being of local origin, today the police have to draw on narrow priorities established at the level of central government. *The Development Directions for Criminal Policy* until 2018 states that 'since organized crime is most harmful to society, including economic crimes, corruption, cybercrimes, human trafficking and criminal assaults, including domestic violence, higher attention should be paid to preventing and responding to the above-mentioned crimes' (Riigikogu, 2010a).

Expectations for the police regarding prevention have been considerably changed. *The Police Act* (Eesti Vabariigi Ülemnõukogu, 1990) treats prevention as an issue of secondary importance. Among the police's obligations, the entry in which this issue is mentioned is only eighth on the list. The current *Police and Border Guard Act* (Riigikogu, 2010b) places prevention at the top of the list of police responsibilities. Additional changes that have shifted emphasis towards prevention have been pervasive in development plans as well as in legislation regarding safety (Ref. Riigikogu, 2008, 2010a; Siseministeerium, 2001; Politseiamet, 1999, 2001).

Community policing requires policemen to be generalists rather than specialists, meaning that they ought to have a wide discretion and be responsive to local circumstances in their decisions and, among other things, pay significant attention to minor offenses. The penal law reform as well as the *Police and Border Guard Act* institute greater discretion to policemen than they enjoyed before. At the same time, several established police practices seem to be partly moving in the opposite direction. This may be exemplified by the changes in the application of caution procedure. It is a procedure where in case of minor offences there is an option to leave the offender without penalty and to impose a cautionary fine on him/her (Riigikogu, 2002). One of the indicators of the police becoming more centred on nationally established priorities is the abrupt decline in issuing warnings in 2012, when in a couple of weeks there was a seven-fold decrease of those procedures in traffic related offences (Politsei- ja Piirivalveameti liiklusbüroo, 2013, p. 24). Here we witness the clearest example

of developments that are incompatible with the principles of community policing. Nevertheless, we should remark that the issuance of warnings was applied most extensively in cases of traffic related offences and this tendency reflects primarily the police's focus on established priorities and its general mentality.

### The tactics of the Estonian police

The tactical dimension expresses the philosophies and strategies of community policing in terms of concrete programs and styles of behaviour. Previously we highlighted a significant shift of emphasis towards prevention in the laws regulating both safety development and police action. However, the orientation towards prevention in the basic regulations that frame the everyday work of the prefectures has been rather inconsistent. The statute of prefectures from 1992 (Vabariigi Valitsus, 1992) virtually leaves prevention off the list of basic responsibilities of the prefectures. The basic regulation of prefectures from 2010 sets crime prevention in second place on the list, and the 2012 basic regulation of prefectures, after their reorganisation into de-concentrated units, places crime prevention in tenth place on the list of basic responsibilities of prefectures (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet peadirektor, 2012). According to the last two documents, the first responsibility of a prefecture is receiving and registering incoming information. This illustrates a certain discrepancy between the philosophical and strategic dimensions.

The main controversies are related to the working arrangements of police units that are in direct contact with the community. This is articulated mainly in the working procedures of patrols and constables. These procedures provide that patrolling policemen are in most cases not related to concrete communities, but those constables who are responsible for safety in concrete areas often engaged in patrolling. Regulations regarding patrolling have not witnessed many significant changes over the last two decades (Politseiamet, 1993; Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2010a).

A crucial feature of community police is a policeman who knows the community and who is known by the community, who receives input from the community about the problems and who solves them in cooperation with the community. In Estonia, significant changes have taken place regarding constable work. While the working instructions for constables from 1998 treat constables as officials responsible for ensuring public order and enforcing the law (Politseiamet, 1998), the police development plan from 1999 sets a goal that by the year 2001 a 'constable has become an initiator of criminal prevention and law enforcement work in his or her service area' (Politseiamet, 1999). Today's instructions for regional police work view constables as police officials with specialist-like functions, who in their activities take into account the community's needs and focus on solving problems in their area (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2010b). Based on regulations, we could say that the role of constables has been transformed from being the guarantors of public order and safety into that of agents who link the police and the community and who solve problems of community safety. At the same time, the actual prevalence of centrally established police work priorities and the considerable reduction of constables shed a different kind of light on such capacities. Constables' work is more functionally confined to central priorities and opportunities for dealing with communities' problems have decreased. In terms of recourses, there will just be fewer and fewer policemen who are closely tied to particular communities.

### The organisation of the Estonian police

Through the reorganisation of organisational structure, culture and management style, the community police aims at decreasing hierarchy and bureaucracy and changing the profile of policemen from narrow specialists to generalists.

The development plan from 1999 set the goal that ‘through optimisation there will be up to eight police prefectures in Estonia’ (Politseiamet, 1999, p. 23), but already in the next plan the number of prefectures was reduced to a maximum of four (Siseministeerium, 2001).

We should mention here again the transition to branch based management in 2010, which lengthened the decision process and transformed the existing territory oriented police structure into one that was largely function-oriented. In addition to its structural changes, the police have also changed the number and proportions of policemen. Prevention oriented focus was reflected in the 1999 development plan, which aimed to raise the percentage of police staff that would be active in law enforcement and crime prevention to 60% of the entire police personnel. In 2008 the Ministry of the Interior prioritised traffic control and raised the percentage of law enforcement staff to 70%, and this has, with minor variations, remained the proportion thus far. In addition to the formal structure of the police and the number and proportions of the policemen, the specificity of police organisation is mirrored in its culture – by how the police treat themselves, what kind of career system and values they have in general.

The most extensive fluctuations have been in the police career system. When building a police from the military militia, a goal was set to develop a civil organisation. In accordance with the *Police Act* (Eesti Vabariigi Ülemnõukogu, 1990) the military system of ranks was abandoned and the policemen became career civil servants, whose ranks were determined by job positions. However, the *Police and Border Guard Act* that came into force in 2010 actually took a step towards the military-like ranking system (Riigikogu, 2010b). The effects of those changes on the everyday behaviour of policemen cannot be underestimated and they are to a certain extent reflected in the management principles of the police. The latter could be traced through looking at the changes that have occurred in the basic regulations.

The statute of the Police Board from 1991 established the board’s basic responsibilities as follows: proper fulfilment of police assignments and ensuring the legality of police action (Vabariigi Valitsus, 1991). The reform of the board in 2004, on the one hand, abolished the small prefectures and established four large prefectures; on the other hand, the central office of the board primarily adopted the role of strategy and development designing, leaving relatively broad discretion to the prefectures. The statute of the PBGB from 2010, however, establishes that ‘the board’s purview is management and development of the police, executing state supervision and implementation of the enforcement powers of the state and nation-wide fulfilment of police assignments’ (Siseminister, 2009). The hierarchical notion of police is also exemplified in the same document by the order of substitution of the Director General of the PBGB, which in turn sets different branches of internal security into an order of priority: boarder guard, criminal police, public order, citizenship and migration.

These changes in the form and culture of the organisation do not just happen spontaneously, but through policemen who carry them out. The police organisation is composed of people who have been prepared for police work. It is precisely the preparation of the policemen that can form the basis for different expectations towards police action. Leaving aside the degree training of the police and analysing the plans for the in-service training of the Estonian police from 2010-2013, we could claim that the policemen are trained in very specific issues and that a large part of in-service training is related to getting to know the changed legislation and the new databases. At the same time, something that has been almost completely neglected is the training of police managers, as well as education on the methods of police work (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet, 2013a).

## Conclusions

We found that the dominating tendencies in the overall development of the Estonian police are marked by contradictory directions both within different dimensions of the police as well as between them. In view of the *philosophical* dimension, the emphasis has become more prevention-oriented;

there is support for introducing management principles originating from the private sector, and the responsibility for safety is being shared – at the levels of both legislation and government development plans – with all members of society or rather even emphasising individual responsibility. On the other hand, and moving to the strategic dimension, compared to the early years of the restored Estonian police, the formal connections between the police and the municipalities have been considerably weakened.

A community oriented trend in the *strategic* dimension could also be seen in the emphasis on prevention and the enhancement of policemen's discretion. But the drastic decrease in the number of constables in recent decades makes the police's opportunities to implement the strategic principles of community oriented approach rather problematic. The most significant change at the strategic level is the change in the treatment of crime according to which crime is no longer managed based on local specifics, but in terms of priorities established at the national level. This appears to be a general trend in centralisation oriented police reforms (see Crawford, 2006; Hughes & Rowe, 2007) and is incompatible with the community police model, since it entails a lack of attention to minor offences.

According to the *tactical* dimension of community policing, the scope of constables' activities should be extended: instead of being merely the protectors of public order, they should become policemen who are responsive to a community's interests. In view of this, Estonia targeting patrol police officers as higher national priorities, which may not be relevant for concrete communities, is a sign of departure from the community oriented approach. Furthermore, we should note that the direct regulations concerning the work of the prefectures set bureaucratic activities like registering and handling reports in a primary position and leave a secondary role for prevention, which is in contradiction with the overall directions of the community oriented philosophical dimension of the Estonian police.

The most apparent changes during the analysed period have occurred in the *organisational* dimension. Estonia's increase of the percentage of law enforcement policemen is well in tune with the community police model. The opposite could be said about the country's incorporation of small regional prefectures into large ones, as well as about the changes in management principles (which the establishment of PBGB entailed) from territory oriented to those of function oriented principles. It must be noted here that it is not the incorporation of small prefectures per se, but the incorporation for economic reasons rather than for communities' interests is what makes it incompatible with community orientation. The biggest change in the organisational culture during the period analysed is the inculcation of a military-like career system and the values of a centralised and functional organisation. It is significant that during the period of change there is an absence of training courses for police managers for coping with organisational changes as well as education or training on police work methodology for having a grasp of different opportunities for organising police work.

Consequently, we can see discrepant developments in the philosophical and the strategic as well as in the tactical and organisational dimensions of the Estonian police. The general development plans and legislation are pushing the police towards one direction, while the organisation and tactics are not quite moving down the same path. We witnessed how in practice the Estonian police have developed towards ends that are prioritised by the community police conception. But this has happened without conscious reflection and application of that conception. The development of the Estonian police has evolved through pragmatic innovations and adaptations. For more than two decades, intensive reforms took place without relying on any clear conceptual models. But at the same time, and despite the discrepancies we highlighted in our analysis, the efficiency and legitimacy of police work have increased and safety indicators in Estonia have improved considerably over the 1991-2013 period.

In sum, Estonia seems to be a success story against all odds: it has not implemented its safety and police related policies in accordance with the prescriptions of the relevant and internationally acknowledged policy *models*, but has in *practice* nevertheless achieved the aims for which those policy models are designed in the first place. We cannot take up the explanation of this somewhat unexpected



connection within the scope of this paper. The research presented in this paper is exploratory in character rather than explanatory (cf. Gerring, 2011). The need for such research stems partly from the fact that the developments in countries that have no pervasive conceptions for organising police, have received less attention in the literature on police studies. The current article tried to fill this gap through concentrating on the case of Estonia. The need for filling this gap is not an end in itself, of course, but stems from a wider concern pertinent to contemporary issues of policy design and implementation: what is the role of policy models in public administration reforms and innovations? We cannot respond properly to this question here, but as a way of concluding we briefly argue for certain general hypotheses regarding policy reforms that our current research suggests.

A hypothesis from our analysis is that the ideal-typical policy models (police models in our case) cannot be prevailing points of departure for any organisational, institutional or policy reform. Reforms and innovations constitute activating new dimensions or subsystems of the organisation rather than replacing the existing ones. This is the point of both Mintzberg's (1993) organisation theory as well as Ponsaers's (2001) view about the dynamics of the development of different police models. As we already indicated in the introduction, the case of Estonia could be a valuable lesson about policy development process in which the policy itself is not explicitly stated. As research suggests, not having an explicit and readymade template or formulation of policy might not be detrimental to policy development if we see policy problems (such as safety) as 'wicked' rather than 'simple' or even 'complex' problems. In fact, often 'treating' or 'coping with' (rather than 'solving') 'wicked problems' presumes flexible and open ended policy design (see Peters, 2015) and the recognition that "although every 'solution' for dealing with a wicked problem is necessarily open to further interrogation and adaptation, this is no bad thing" (Head and Alford, 2015, p. 716). By definition, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' 'solutions' to 'wicked problems', but only 'good' or 'bad' ones (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Dealing with them is always a 'science of 'muddling through' as Lindblom (1959) dubbed it long ago. Camillus has quite recently advised business executives to learn from this 'science', when he stated that 'focus[ing] on the few actions they will be able to take rather than the myriad options before them ... policy makers [are able] to analyze options quickly and make decisions that meet the goals of several constituents' (Camillus, 2008, p. 104). Through such 'muddling through', 'governments will make progress by constantly making small policy changes' (p. 104).

If we see policy reform processes as wicked problems to be 'muddled through' rather than 'implemented', then the central concern for any reform of a large scale organisation (such as the police) is how to put to work some new dimensions of the organisation in a manner that will not cause excessive tensions with the existing ones, tensions that would lead to the failure of the reforms or to the paralysation of the already established organisation. Therefore, policy models (like the police models discussed in this paper) must primarily form a background that enables to inculcate innovations in practice in a manner that causes minimal tensions between the new and the existing order and would build a synergy out of the combination of new and old dimensions. In case of police reforms, keeping in mind this caution might entail designing both policing strategy and organisation in a more multidimensional manner, which would enable meeting the contradictory pressures at the local, national and supranational level. This does not make the police models irrelevant, however, the latter need to be developed in view of the transformed understandings of power, strategy and professionalism. Elsewhere, we have taken initial steps at reflecting on these possibilities (see Suve et al., 2015).

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